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ABSTRACT

In 1998, the Mississippi Legislature amended Mississippi Code Section 37-17 concerning the requirements for local school district professional development programs. The Department of Education then revised this portion of the model to reflect the statutory changes. This handbook contains the definition and purpose of professional development and identifies the principles of excellence which provide the foundation for professional development programs. It also contains the requirements for schools and districts as well as individual educators and describes the nature of the professional development experiences they are encouraged to plan. Seven sections include: "Principles of Excellence in Professional Development"; "Professional Development" (definition and purpose); "District/School Components" (statutory requirements, state board of education requirements, and recommended practice); "Individual Component" (license renewal requirements and rationale); and "Professional Development Options" (including conversion of professional development options to continuing education units). Two appendixes present eight characteristics of effective professional development and a glossary of relevant terms. (Contains 10 bibliographic references.) (SM)

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Professional Development for the New Millennium

Mississippi Department of Education

2002

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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Professional Development For the New Millennium

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Office of Leadership Development & Enhancement

Legislative Mandate: Section 37-17-8, Mississippi Code of 1972, amended 1998 Legislative

(1) The State Board of Education, through the Commission of School Accreditation, shall establish criteria for comprehensive in-service staff development plans. These criteria shall: (a) include, but not be limited to, formula and guidelines for allocating available state funds for in-service training to local districts; (b) require that a portion of the plans be devoted exclusively for the purpose of providing staff development for beginning teachers within that local district and for no other purpose; and (c) require that a portion of the school district's in-service training for administrators and teachers be dedicated to the application and utilization of various disciplinary techniques. The board shall each year make recommendations to the Legislature concerning the amount of funds which shall be appropriated for this purpose.

(2) Beginning with the 1998-1999 school year, school districts shall not be required to submit staff development plans to the Commission on School Accreditation for approval. However, any school district accredited at Level 1 or Level 2 shall include, as a part of any required corrective action plan, provisions to address staff development in accordance with State Board of Education requirements. All school districts, unless specifically exempt from this section, must maintain on file staff development plans as required under this section. The plan shall have been prepared by a district committee appointed by the district superintendent and consisting of teachers, administrators, school board members, and lay people, and it shall have been approved by the district superintendent.

(3) In order to insure that teachers are not overburdened with paperwork and written reports, local school districts and the State Board of Education shall take such steps as may be necessary to further reduction of paperwork requirements on teachers.

(4) If any school district meets Level 4 or 5 accreditation standards, the State Board of Education, in its discretion, may exempt such school districts from the provisions of this section.

1

INTRODUCTION

In 1982, Mississippi passed a landmark piece of legislation, which began a grassroots wave of education reform that swept the nation. Included in that legislation were mandates for the establishment of a statewide system of professional development which affected every educator in the state. In 1996 the State Board of Education approved a new professional development model which supports educators in meeting the ever-changing needs of students as they prepare for the challenges of a technologically advanced society.

New curriculum frameworks, performance assessments, increased student performance expectations, and changes in school organization call for new forms of professional development which assist educators in developing new skills and strategies to effect change in practice. Professional development must shift from a fragmented system based upon one-shot activities to one which is embedded in the every day life of the school. It must be planned and implemented by the educators it is designed to serve.

Educators must have time, resources, and opportunities to assess their own teaching methods, to develop and learn new subject matter, to work together as professionals, to develop and implement school improvement plans, and to stay abreast of current research in their fields of study. Professional development is essential to school improvement and must be seen as an investment in life-long learning for all educators.

The new model for professional development includes multiple forms of learning intended to be relevant to teachers in the classroom, as well as supportive of school plans for organizational improvement. It is based upon a shared vision and goals for improving student performance including achievement, behavior, and attitude. It supports professional development that is intensive, high-quality and of a sufficient duration to have a positive impact on teaching and learning and ultimately on student success in the classroom.

The Mississippi professional development model was developed by a professional development work group appointed by then State Superintendent of Education Tom Burnham. The work group was comprised of administrators, teachers and pupil services personnel from public school districts and representatives from business, community colleges, institutions of higher learning, the Mississippi Department of Education, and the state legislature.

Over a period of six months, work group members shared their progress with school district consortia, professional and state organizations, advisory boards, and other education support groups. Prior to finalizing the model, they hosted regional hearings on the proposed draft and revised the document to present to the State Board of Education for approval.

In 1998, the Mississippi Legislature amended Mississippi Code Section 37-17-8 concerning the requirements for local school district professional development programs. The Department of Education then revised this portion of the model to reflect the statutory changes.

This handbook includes the definition and purpose of professional development and identifies the

principles of excellence which provide the foundation for professional development programs. It also contains the requirements for schools and districts as well as individual educators and describes the nature of the professional development experiences they are encouraged to plan.

2

PRINCIPLES OF EXCELLENCE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development programs must be based on the following principles:

- Professional development is based on a shared vision and goals for improving student performance derived through a strategic planning process.
- Professional development advances individual growth and organizational improvement.
- Professional development involves institutional collaboration.
- Professional development provides for networking and collegiality.
- Professional development models constructivist teaching that builds knowledge through exploring, debating, questioning, and reflecting.
- Professional development provides time and follow-up necessary for change in practice.
- Professional development is site-based and school-initiated.
- Professional development has an evaluation component that focuses on improvement in teaching practice and in student results.
- Professional development is ongoing and job-embedded.
- Professional development enhances knowledge of subject matter, teaching and learning, and child development.
- Professional development is supported by resources of time, money, and personnel.
- Professional development addresses the diversity of all learners.
- Professional development acknowledges the Standards for Staff
- Development published by the National Staff Development Council.
- Professional development encourages individuals to generate, articulate, and disseminate knowledge based on their classroom experiences and action research.
- Professional development allows stakeholders to develop and strengthen leadership skills.

3

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Definition

Professional development is a growth-promoting learning process that empowers stakeholders* to improve the educational organization.

5

Purpose

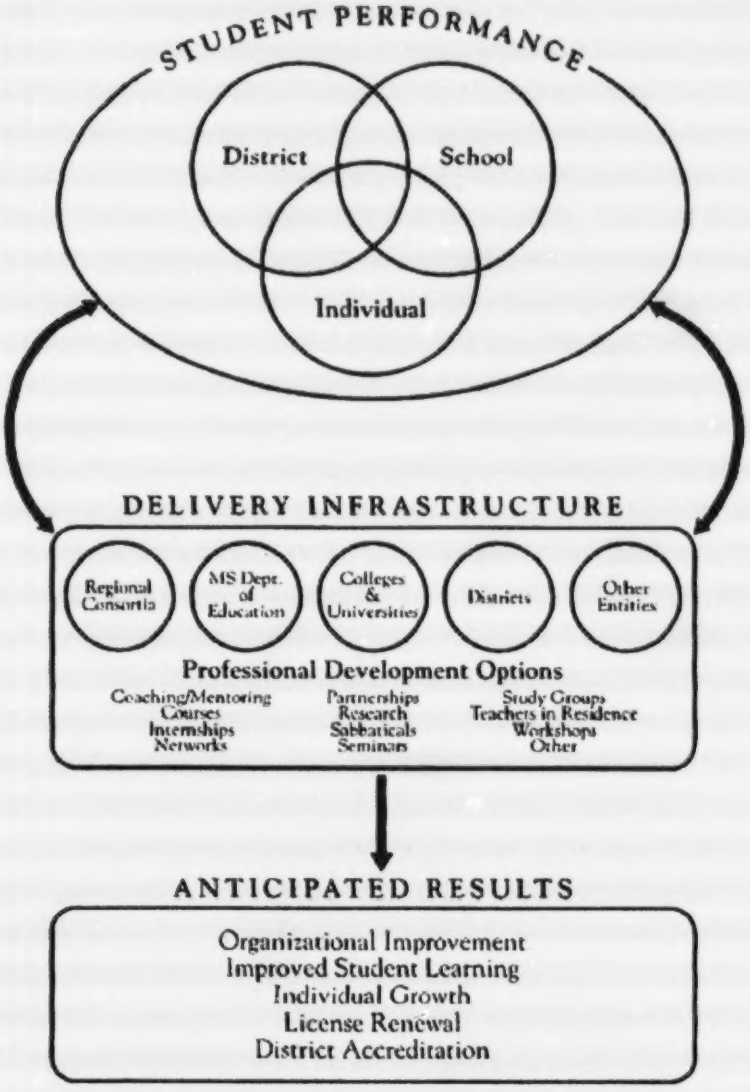
To improve student learning by creating an environment that will enable stakeholders* to:

- invest in quality opportunities to grow individually and collaboratively,
- enhance job-related skills
- acquire new knowledge, and
- share expertise and insights.

Stakeholders - teachers, administrators, staff, and other school personnel.

4

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL



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DISTRICT/SCHOOL COMPONENT

Statutory Requirements

7

In accordance with Section 37-17-8, Mississippi Code of 1972, amended in 1998, each school district shall plan and implement a comprehensive professional development program that complies with the following:

- The professional development plan shall be prepared by a district committee appointed by the superintendent and composed of teachers, administrators, school board members, and lay people
- The district superintendent shall approve the plan.
- A portion of the plan must be devoted to training for beginning teachers within the district.
- A portion of the professional development training for teachers and administrators must be dedicated to the application and utilization of various disciplinary techniques.
- Beginning with school year 1998-1999, school districts are not required to submit professional development plans to the Commission on School Accreditation for approval.
- Any school district accredited at Level 1 or Level 2 shall include, as part of its corrective action plan, provisions to address professional development in accordance with State Board of Education requirements.
- All school districts, except for those accredited at Level 4 or Level 5, must maintain professional development plans on file within the district.

State Board of Education Regulations

State Board of Education regulations include the following requirements:

- The purpose of the school district professional development program shall be the continuous improvement of student learning and performance.
- Each school district professional development program is to be based on the Principles of Excellence in Professional Development .
- The program may be district-wide or school-based.
- All school district personnel have a contractual obligation to participate in the district's professional program. District professional development activities can not be used for license renewal. License renewal options are separate from the required district professional development program.

Recommended Practice

To have a quality professional development program, school districts are encouraged to incorporate the following:

- A shared vision with goals for improving student performance,
- A planning process that fosters team building and shared decision making,
- A variety of learning options essential to enhance individual growth and organizational improvement, and
- Time and structure for demonstration, practice, reflection, and sharing.

Successful professional development programs strengthen the effectiveness of the educational organization, lead to improved student learning and performance, and promote professional growth for all employees.

See Appendix A for additional information on designing professional development.

INDIVIDUAL COMPONENT

Educators have the professional and contractual responsibility to participate in the school district's professional development program and in professional development options for license renewal. The selection of professional development options is to be focused on improving student learning. Each educator is responsible for selecting and monitoring his/her individual professional development program. Educators are also responsible for maintaining and submitting documentation for license renewal to the Office of Educator Licensure in the Mississippi Department of Education. (See Guidelines for Educator Licensure.)

License Renewal Requirements

Within each five-year cycle,
an individual must complete the following for license renewal:

Bachelor's degree or equivalent

- Ten (10) continuing education units (CEUs) in content area or job/skill* related area

or

- Six (6) semester hours in content area or job/skill* related area

or

- Three (3) semester hours in content area or job/skill* related area

and

- Five (5) continuing education units (CEUs) in content area or job/skill* related area

Master's degree or above

- Three (3) semester hours in content area or job/skill* related area

or

- Five (5) continuing education units (CEUs) in content area or job/skill* related area.

Content area refers to the area of licensure (e.g., mathematics, science, special education, etc.). Job/skill related areas include pedagogy and skills essential for effective teaching and leadership (e.g., computer technology, cooperative learning, learning styles, etc.)

Rationale

Through varied opportunities for professional development, educators can continue to learn both inside and outside of local schools and districts. They stay abreast of current knowledge in fields of teaching and learning and improve educational practices that lead to enhanced student learning. Professional development experiences encourage educators to network with colleagues and other professionals, as well as to pursue advanced degrees.

7

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

In selecting activities to fulfill the requirements for organizational and individual professional development experiences, it is recommended that the following process be utilized to determine the appropriate professional development option:

- Identify needs
- Formulate a plan to meet the needs
- Engage in planned activity
- Assess professional development experience through reflection and sharing

The intent of the *Model* is to encourage individuals and organizations to pursue professional development experiences that are relevant. These experiences may be self-directed, structured, and/or field-based. They may include, but are not limited to:

- Action Research Partnerships
- Apprenticeships Sabbaticals Coaching/Mentoring
- Seminars/Institutes College/University Courses

- Internships Study Groups
- National Board Certification Networks
- Workshops

(For additional information on these options, see Appendix B.)

Conversion of Professional Development Options to Continuing Education Units

Individual professional development options selected by educators must be converted to CEUs for use in license renewal. Decisions on the conversion may be made by any approved CEU provider.

Educators should submit a proposal outlining the purpose/intent of the option; what effect it would have on their classrooms, schools, or districts; the amount of time they expect to invest; and their recommendation for the number of CEUs to be granted. Approved CEU providers will make final determinations.

APPENDIX A

Eight Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

The following design characteristics focus on professional development strategies that research has shown to be essential to improving students' learning over time. To be effective professional development should:

1. Be driven by analysis of the differences between (a) goals and standards for student learning and (b) student performance (Miller, Lord and Dorney 1994; Fullan 1991; Howey and Collinson 1995). Such analyses define what educators need rather than what they want to learn, make professional development student-centered, and provide evidence about the usefulness of alternative strategies for school improvement.

2. Involve learners (e.g., teachers) in identifying what they need to learn and, when possible, in developing the learning opportunity or process to be used (Little 1993; Miller, Lord and Dorney 1994; Tillema and Imants 1995; Borko and Putnam 1995). This engagement increases educators' motivation to learn and makes it more likely that what is learned will be meaningful and relevant to particular contexts and problems.

3. Be primarily school-based and integral to school operations (Little 1993; Smylie 1995; Guskey 1995; Grossman 1992; Feiman-Nemser and Parker 1992; Little and McLaughlin 1993; Joyce and Showers 1995). Providing educators opportunities to recognize and solve authentic problems is a powerful form of staff development.

4. Provide learning opportunities that relate to individual needs but are organized around collaborative problem solving (Little 1993; Miller, Lord, and Dorney 1994; Guskey 1995; Huberman 1995; Rosenholtzz 1989; Hargreaves 1994; Fullan 1991). Working together to address issues of common concern helps educators identify both causes and potential solutions to problems. Through collaboration, educators can clarify learning needs and share knowledge and expertise.

5. Be continuous and ongoing, involving follow-up and support for further learning--including support from sources external to the school (National Education Association 1995; Miller, Lord, and Dorney 1994; NCRTE 1991; Guskey 1995). As educators put into practice what they've learned from professional development, they often discover that they need to know more to be effective. If that need for learning is not met, educators will likely not increase either their professional competence or student achievement; they'll probably also be less motivated to pursue other professional development opportunities. Although most professional development should be school based, educators also need to enrich this learning with new ideas and knowledge from sources beyond the school.

6. Encourage educators to systematically evaluate the results of their efforts to apply what they've learned through staff development. The best evaluations involve analyzing multiple sources of information on both student outcomes and the implementation process (Little 1993; Guskey 1995; Tillema and Imants 1995; NCRTE 1991; Joyce and Showers 1995). Knowing the extent to which professional development has influenced student achievement and why (or why not) contributes to the design of, and incentives for, further learning.

7. Provide opportunities to engage in developing a theoretical understanding of the knowledge and skills to be learned (Borko and Putnam 1995; Feiman-Nemser and Parker 1992; Fullan 1991; McDiarmid 1994; Tillema and Imants 1995; Eraut 1995, NCRTE 1991; Joyce and Showers 1995). Virtually all educational ideas and practices need to be adapted to particular students and contexts. Such modification is more likely to be effective when it is informed by a theory in which the educator has confidence.

8. Be integrated with a comprehensive change process that deals with the impediments to, and facilitators of, student learning (Little 1993; Smylie 1995; Guskey 1995; Joyce and Showers 1995). For professional development to be effective, what is learned must be practiced. Too often, educators learn new things they cannot act upon because there is no organizational commitment to continual experimentation and improvement.

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APPENDIX B

Action Research is a disciplined process that involves educators in actively solving real problems in

teaching and learning. It includes collecting and analyzing data to diagnose problems, researching potential solutions, acting on selected approaches and assessing and sharing the results. There are many types of action research including that which is conducted by an individual or small group of educators to improve practice or action research which is undertaken by an entire faculty to improve schoolwide performance.

Apprenticeships/Internships provide opportunities for educators to work and learn while gaining practical on-the-job experience under the direct supervision of an experienced expert practitioner. Examples include business/industry internships in which educators work with local business to gain greater understanding of the demands of the current workplace in relation to curriculum and instruction.

Coaching/Mentoring is a peer-to-peer interaction aimed at improving performance. Partners select each other and work on problems voluntarily. The primary purpose is support, not evaluation; thus peers are more appropriate partners in this professional growth experience.

College/University Courses provide opportunities to expand content knowledge and acquire advanced degrees. The content and format of courses for educators are expected to reflect the principles of excellence. Educators may apply courses in their content area (e.g., mathematics, science, special education, etc.) or in a job/skill related area (e.g., technology, methodology, learning styles, etc.) to the renewal of their license.

National Board Certification through its application process, requires teachers to document their practices, reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, and demonstrate specific knowledge and skill in relation to standards established by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. This experience provides excellent professional development for teachers, and the standards provide an outstanding guide for planning professional development opportunities.

Networks are groups of educators who share a common experience, concern or interest. They generally focus on specific subject matter and seek to deepen content knowledge and enhance professional practice. Networks provide powerful learning opportunities because they engage people in collective work on authentic issues. They allow educators to get beyond their own classrooms and schools and consider different perspectives and possibilities. The ***MississippiWriting Project*** and the ***Onward to Excellence Network*** are examples of current networks in Mississippi.

Partnerships are collaboratives in which each partner complements the other in achieving what neither can achieve alone. There are many rights and responsibilities depending on each partner's willingness to collaborate and to give up a measure of independence. Partners enter into a formal agreement to engage in a specified activity together.

Sabbaticals are periods of leave (of varying lengths) granted to educators to pursue job-related experiences that provide new insights and enhance knowledge and skills. In addition they break the cycle of continued performance of the same job over a period of time. Examples include travel, research, studies of other educational systems, etc.

Seminars/Institutes are intensive learning experiences that typically serve the purpose of substantive content and professional renewal. They may present new ways of thinking about school topics or alternate methods of engaging students in learning. Whatever the emphasis, it is the intensity of study that most characterizes the seminar/ institute as a professional development option. They offer focused, continuous investigation of topics or themes that cannot be explored in occasional workshops.

Study Groups are small collaborative groups organized and sustained by participating educators who seek to learn about a topic of common interest. Study groups may be organized within individual schools, districts, or beyond. Such groups provide a time and structure where educators can discuss educational issues, where learning is ongoing and where norms of professional collaboration can exist.

Workshops are brief intensive educational training programs that involve relatively small groups of educators in participatory problem-solving. The most effective training programs include exploration of theory, trials of new skills with feedback and reflection, as well as coaching and other forms of support within the workplace.

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